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PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARGARET WAYLAND

I am truly amazed at the industry and enthusiasm displayed by so many people when they are asked to help prepare for Montessori events. We are constantly uncovering gems who have so much to offer and give so generously. This working together for the benefit of the children is strongly evident in all that we do.

I would like to thank everyone who helped out to make Shannon Helfrich's visit another inspiring and successful one. It will be great when she comes back in October for the training.

Speaking about training, we are very encouraged at the response we have received from people interested in taking the AMI course. These have come from far and wide, and continue to flood in. The course will be limited to 24 students, however, so if you are at all interested I would advise you to apply as soon as possible. We have now sent out 15 letters offering places and have still more interviews to hold.

The schools will be approached soon for their support of these students as they have done so generously in the past. It is important that the Montessori community continues to have new teachers. This preserves the viability of every school. Thank you all in anticipation of your help.

AMTEF has now been incorporated and the board elected. I have accepted the role of president of the foundation. Consequently I have decided to vacate the position of president of the Alumni. My role will be capably carried out by our vice-president, Candice Shields. I will continue to remain a member of the board of AAAA and thank you all for your continuing support of this valuable organisation.

WORKING WITH YOUR ASSISTANT M. SHANNON HELFRICH

In most pre-school Montessori classrooms, there are two adults responding to the needs of the child. Dr. Montessori would most likely consider this too many adults for a group of 20-25 children. However schools in most states are bound by the day care codes or education statutes mandating a specific adult-child ratio and authorities are reticent to vary from this standard regardless of the nature of the program. For Montessorians the challenge is to accommodate this situation in a manner that still frees the children to act on their own behalf, fostering functional and social independence, while at the same time utilising the expertise of the second person. This may require education and adaptation on the part of both adults.

There are four keys to success in a pre-school class with two adults:

- establishing a working relationship between the guide and the assistant,
- clearly defining the roles and expectations,
- modelling behaviours and manner of interacting with children,
- utilising the skills and abilities of the assistant in ways that preserve his/her self efficacy.

First and foremost is the establishing of the working relationship. Some guides participate in the interviewing and hiring of their assistant, others do not have that opportunity. It is my experience that neither approach guarantees success.



During her visit in April, Shannon Helfrich presented a workshop for Assistants. It was so well received that the workshop will be held again in Melbourne in December.

WORKING WITH YOUR ASSISTANT M. SHANNON HELFRICH

The question is how and where does a solid working relationship begin? It begins before school starts and the children arrive. Most programs have a period of weeks prior to the arrival of the children that is intended for the preparation of the environment and the building of the school community. This is a great time to get to know your assistant. Engage them in creating the environment. This can accomplish a number of purposes:

- a bit of basic philosophy can be shared while explaining why the environment is arranged as it is and how this benefits the children,
- this can be a time to discuss how the environment is cared for,
- it is a time to discover specific areas of interest or talent that the assistant brings to the class community,
- this can be a time to discuss together the routines for the first few days and the routines that will provide a structure for the children's interactions.

Take your assistant shopping as you purchase those last few things needed for the beginning of the school year. This is a more relaxed and casual time when you can get to know each other a little. The value of communication cannot be overly emphasised here!

As the year begins, establish a time and routine for communication with your assistant throughout the year. Failing to plan and organise for this aspect of on-going communication is dangerous. Most of us believe that we will make time for whatever needs to be discussed without any overt structure. This usually leads to a lack of communication and the escalating of difficult situations because there is no forum for discussion built in on a regular basis. This is too important to leave it to chance! Some guides plan a set time daily or at least weekly for discussion, others offer the assistant a notebook in which the assistant can record observations of things she enjoyed, things that bothered her, things that are confusing and about which he/she would like clarification or has questions. Sometimes, the guide's response could be written directly in the notebook and didn't require further dialogue, but many times it brought issues to the surface or to the attention of the guide at the very time the dialogue was critical. These are only two ideas of things that can be done to foster on-going communication. Each guide needs to find his/her own format. What is important is that you have one!

The second task is that of defining roles and expectations. Many a new guide responds to this by saying, "But I don't know what I want the assistant to do." Even if this seems common or appropriate for a new teacher, it is fraught with danger. The guide is the one Montessori trained adult in the environment. It is the guide's responsibility to create the basis for a harmonious atmosphere. Even more important, the assistant can't feel confident and secure in their interactions with the children or the guide, if the expectations are a hidden or undefined agenda. We many times function with the erroneous assumption that she'll just know what to do and how I wish it to be done. Certainly, our expectations have to be appropriate to the needs of the group and how they are best served by the two adults. Some assistants are best suited to doing observations and having limited direct interactions with the children. Other assistants have learned, or are learning, the techniques for interacting

and take on a much more active role in the environment. A lot depends upon the individual's personality and background. Regardless, think through completely the roles and responsibilities of the assistant. Show where the materials are that will be needed, just as we would do with the children. This brings us to the third challenge.

This challenge requires modelling for the assistant those behaviours and patterns of interacting that we ourselves model and in turn, wish the children to adopt. Where to be during the morning greeting and entrance procedures, how to greet, and how to offer help when it is needed. Social interactions are the life blood of a smoothly running preschool classroom wherein the adults and the children apply their "grace and courtesy". The children learn from both adults what to say in certain interactions and situations. If we offer a mixed message, we leave them confused and the assistant feeling incompetent or humiliated. It is impossible to anticipate each and every situation that is going to occur during the year, but we can be prepared for those common occurrences encountered in all groups of children. One of the most important things we can model is how *not* to intervene when children do not need our help. It can be a new learning experience for many assistants to know when to stay out of the way, or how not to attract attention to the adult, thus stimulating independence, It is no small task to overcome our natural instinct to "help".

It may sound to this point as if we have established a strong framework for a non-functioning assistant. As most of us know, the assistant can be a great asset to the class community. This brings us to the fourth challenge: that of using the talents and interests of the assistant for the benefit of the community. At the beginning of the year, that extra pair of hands are vital. New children require great attention from the guide as they are helped to orient to this new place. The assistant can be a help in helping the older children settle into work choices while the guide attends to the new child. At the beginning of the year, there are fewer children who are independent in getting their own supplies especially for practical life related activities. This is one area where the extra hands are critical.

As the year progresses and the group becomes more self-sufficient, the assistant's role will change. I'm not sure if this is the right moment to insert one of my well-known "soap-boxes", but I am going to anyway. There are really only two things that assistants may not do: these are give presentations and serve as class disciplinarian. The assistant is not trained to do presentations and has not spent time honing the analysed movements necessary to connect children to the materials. To then assign the assistant to the role of class disciplinarian so you are freed to do presentations is just as inappropriate. It is the guide's responsibility to define, establish within the group and follow through on the limits and behaviours appropriate to the group. It is the guide who models these behaviours and attitudes and who is trained to build this atmosphere as a part of creating and maintaining the environment. Beyond these two "shall not's", there is great diversity in the things that the assistant can do and these activities are at the discretion of the individual guides. I am reluctant to give any list of possible activities, as there are so many strong opinions about what assistants can and should do. However, let me offer you some possibilities to think

about. Assistants, within the parameters of their own comfort zones and abilities can do these types of activities:

- Read to children;
- Sing songs with the children, or teach new songs that they have checked out with you for appropriateness;
- *Listen and Do* language games, once they have learned the technique and use your guidelines for different levels of vocabulary;
- *Bring Me* games in language or mathematics;
- Story problems as summaries of decimal system operations with golden beads;
- Naming language cards or map pieces
- Writing slips for those children who are practicing reading
- Telling true stories
- The *Sound Game*, after you have accessed his/her ability to articulate the phonemes and to mix a variety of experience levels according to the makeup of the group of children;
- Assisting the guide with the organisation of outdoor activities – either in the garden or in the play areas.

These are all activities that involve direct interaction with the children. As the group becomes more able to meet their own needs, these more active roles diminish.

Here are some ideas for the assistant that do not involve direct interaction with the children:

- Material-making – this can be a great help in a class, especially in keeping the language area alive;
- Assisting with the initial preparations of snack and/or lunch, even though the children may be able to do much of the work after the initial gathering;
- Assisting the guide with the care and maintenance of the prepared environment. This is a never ending task and requires two sets of hands, although I have had groups of children who were incredibly eager and efficient in taking on this role.

All in all, your assistant can become a great companion as you journey together with the children. We talk of the pre-primary environment as a Children's House. In a smoothly running class, the children feel as if they have two loving, sensitive, caring "caretakers" who are there to assist them along their path. Just like parents, we serve best when we facilitate and can avoid being an obstacle to the process unfolding in front of us.

SHANNON HELFRICH MOVEMENT SEMINAR BY MARGARET FAGAN



How fortunate many of us were, on Saturday 24th April, to attend a Seminar on Movement given by Shannon Helfrich. Shannon was here on a brief visit from the USA prior to taking up the position of Director of Training for the AMI course to be run in Sydney later this year. Shannon is a gifted and entertaining speaker, and the hours just flew, despite the fact that for the most part we were seated motionless while she waxed eloquent on the subject of movement. She took us through the development of movement (both of the hand and towards equilibrium) in the child from birth to 6, based on the information contained in Chapters XIII and XIV of *The Absorbent Mind*, with the addition of some fascinating contemporary scientific analysis. In my eighteen years as a Montessorian I have sat through many expositions of the data in that famous fold-out table in the Kalakshetra edition of *The Absorbent Mind*, but Shannon presented it with such a freshness and vitality that it was, and I'm sure I speak for everyone there, both energising and affirming. Shannon's talk, (as was Pamela Nunn's excellent presentation at the National Conference last year), was a wonderful reminder of how late twentieth century scientific research confirms what Maria Montessori intuited and observed all those years ago.

Shannon spoke about the need for movement to be incorporated into all activities in a Montessori classroom. There was a time when educators, although recognizing the importance of physical movement, felt that it should be isolated from so-called "intellectual" activities during the school day. So children sat at a desk to work, and then went to the gym or playground for "physical education". Maria Montessori understood the intimate link between physical activity and intellectual development, and Shannon amplified those observations by speaking at length about the importance of practical life exercises in assisting the child's total development.

In the afternoon we were taken through *Walking on the Line* exercises, and, joy of joys, shown a revelatory yet simple way of creating a perfect ellipse on the floor for those activities. Shannon was very emphatic about the need for the line to be elliptical, and explained it with a scientific clarity which I am afraid I am unable to emulate for you here, but rest assured - the ellipse is the ONLY appropriate shape! These practical life exercises come under the broad heading of "analysis and control of movement", and culminate of course

with the *Silence Game*. It was good to be reminded that there should be no music for the basic heel/toe walking. This is exclusively an equilibrium exercise and the total focus is on the muscles of the body. Any outside stimulus such as music can fragment the child's focus. And remember, lovely and convenient though Sanford-Jones's *Walking on the Line* music is, do branch out and experiment with other recorded music and rhythms for those exercises that do require musical accompaniment.

I might just finish off by reminding you of the lovely little round Shannon taught us:

G F E A G F E
Chairs to mend, oh chairs to mend,
E D C F E D C
Mackerel, fresh mackerel,
G C C
Any old rags.

I've put in the note names so you can work it out on the bells, and I'm sure that when you hear the notes you'll remember the rhythm. The G on "Any" is the one below middle C, so play G on the bells to find it, then sing it an octave lower. If you don't think your little ones are up to singing a round yet, don't despair! Sing it with the staff in the morning before the children arrive and it will make you feel good for the rest of the day. If you do feel up to it with the children, a good way to teach rounds with tiny tots is to have them seated in two distinct groups, each led by an adult, you and your assistant. That way they all have a clear voice to follow. And remember, make sure they know a song thoroughly before attempting it as a round.



Thank you to all of you for your support of AAAA. Hopefully we will have more opportunities in the coming year to benefit from Shannon Helfrich's humour and wisdom.

**ASSISTANTS' WORKSHOP
THE ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT**

What precisely is the role of an assistant in a Montessori environment? His or her work is of vital importance in helping the directress to maintain the equilibrium within the class.

The workshop will define and clarify the role of the assistant and will focus on such areas as: observation; learning when and how to intervene; acquiring the ability to help children grow more independent.

The workshop program will include presentations on Introduction to Montessori, Role of the Directress, Role of the Assistant, with special attention given to the Planes of Development, Sensitive Periods, Movement, Language, Independence, The Prepared Environment, Freedom & Discipline and Observation.

The workshop is open to Montessori Assistants, interested Montessori Directresses and anyone interested in working in a Montessori classroom in the future.

MS SHANNON HELFRICH

Ms Shannon Helfrich M Sc., an esteemed AMI lecturer, consultant, examiner and teacher trainer will be presenting this special workshop for Montessori assistants. We encourage all directresses and schools to support their assistants to attend this very valuable workshop.

WORKSHOP LOCATION & TIME

Thurs 2 Dec 1999, 1pm - 4pm

Fri 3 Dec 1999, 9am - 3pm

Collingwood College
Cnr McCutcheon Way
and Cromwell Street

REGISTRATION

The workshop fee is \$120.00. Afternoon tea will be provided Thursday, morning tea and lunch will be provided Friday. Workshop papers and Certificate of Attendance provided to all participants. Registration forms will be sent to Schools in Term Three.



Saturday 4 December 99

9:00am - 5:00pm, lunch included

Collingwood College

Cnr McCutcheon Way & Cromwell Street

Enquiries - Phone

(02) 9527 5687 or (03) 9337 5454

Registration: \$80.00



**ONE DAY
SEMINAR FOR
MONTESSORI
PROFESSIONALS**

on

GRACE & COURTESY

presented by

SHANNON HELFRICH

AMI Director of Training



INCOMING PRESIDENT'S REPORT CANDICE SHIELDS

Margaret has been a superb founding President of the Australian AMI Alumni Association and I take this opportunity to extend my thanks on behalf of the Board. She has worked so hard, attended endless meetings, taken infinite phone calls, with a smile on her face through the frustration and tiredness which does sometimes accompany this kind of role. The Association has achieved brilliant success and we have much for which to thank Margaret. We know she will lead AMTEF into a great future which will uplift the lives of many children and families in years to come.

We were not long, fortunately, without a Vice President, as Rebecca Dallam has accepted our invitation to fill that role. Rebecca, who moved here to Sydney in November, teaches the 6-9 class at the Bronte site of Eastern Suburbs Montessori. She has been enthusiastically and capably helping the Alumni Association. Welcome Rebecca!

We want to thank Lucy Reynolds for coordinating ordering and sales of books and videos so efficiently and carefully for the last 18 months. Lucy will be handing over this important task to Jenny Williams who has kindly agreed to assume this role. See the new roles/phone numbers list below for contact details of those assisting the Alumni.

The seminar for teachers and workshop for assistants with Shannon Helfrich held recently were inspiring and successful on both financial and philosophical levels. Shannon interviewed sixteen candidates for the 3-6 AMI course which will begin in October and more have been interviewed since she returned to the Montessori Institute Northwest in Portland, Oregon. Applications continue to flood in. We are limited to 24 students by the requirements for practice teaching places so if you know someone interested in applying please encourage them to do so immediately.

We are very excited to be able to make available for sale the new booklet, "Montessori in Australia: Honouring the Human Potential", which has been in development since June of last year. This booklet gives an overview of Montessori philosophy and a brief history of Montessori in Australia and includes some lovely archival photos which the AMI kindly gave us permission to include. The current text, which grew out of a souvenir booklet we produced in August during Renilde Montessori's visit, includes a listing of schools in NSW, Victoria and the ACT, but in future we do intend to publish a listing of schools in other states. Sample copies were sent recently to head teachers/principals in Sydney in time for Open Day. If you'd like a sample copy or to order multiple copies (\$2 per copy, orders of 100 or over \$1.75 each) write or phone and let us know.

We are even more excited to announce the new website for AMTEF and the Alumni Association: go to www.montessori-amtef.org.au for news of AMTEF, the Alumni Association and Montessori education in Australia. There is also a new email address: amtef@ozemail.com.au. We thank Megan Tyne for her skills and time establishing this valuable communication resource and for her ongoing dedication and offering of skills and time to the Alumni Association.

As AMTEF is now incorporated and has established itself as the body which holds responsibility for AMI teacher education in Australia, the Alumni Association's direction and focus will change somewhat: now we are really able to build on the experience of collaborative learning we've enjoyed in these last two years. We came together to re-establish Australian AMI teacher training, and that, in spite of many obstacles and against many odds, has happened. But so much more than that has happened: in working to find students and establish a teacher education foundation we find that we are part of a global community, with much to offer and much to learn. Schools have received greater exposure. Interest in Montessori in the broader community has grown and will continue to grow. The presence of student teachers in our classrooms will strengthen and challenge our practice of Montessori philosophy. We clearly need to establish Australian AMI primary teacher training. The Alumni Association may want to work now to establish primary teacher training. As a professional association, the potential for us to continue to work together to deepen our understanding of this profound philosophy and make sure that children in the 21st century are given the gift of a Montessori education is unlimited. Let's go for it!

AAAA Contact Details

<i>President</i>	Candice Shields	02 9660 2752
<i>Vice President</i>	Rebecca Dallam	02 9519 9607
<i>Treasurer</i>	Sue Birdsall	02 9960 2349
<i>Secretary</i>	Chitra Achar	02 9546 4348
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Rosemary Dear	02 9983 9769
<i>Newsletter</i>	Deon Adendorff	02 9416 4176
<i>Book Sales</i>	Jenny Williams	02 9975 5457
<i>Course Enquiries</i>	Marie Engelholm Stackpool	02 9181 1787
<i>AMTEF Liaison</i>	Margaret Wayland	02 9527 3574
<i>Workshops and Publishing</i>	Megan Tyne	02 9971 2634
<i>Training of Trainers Program</i>	Pamela Nunn	02 9412 4408
<i>Publicity</i>	Anthony Milano	02 9713 1714
<i>Melbourne Group</i>	Kate Lennard	03 9486 1343

The AAAA thanks Margaret Wayland for all her work as President of the Alumni Association and in re-establishing AMI Teacher Training in Australia.



CREATIVITY PAMELA NUNN

In Montessori we view creativity in the broadest sense. The child possesses tremendous creativity, which is directed towards becoming a 'developed individual, endowed with a sensitive soul, an eye that sees and a hand that obeys'. This is how Dr. Maria Montessori describes the basic qualities of the creative individual.

Dr Montessori spoke often of the double task of the adaptive and constructive role of the child in human life. She states, 'at birth a child does not have the behaviour characteristics of the group into which he is born; he has to create and prepare them. He has to learn their language and the customs and use of their implements. Whilst developing himself he unconsciously develops his own adaptation to his environment. To understand the child's tendencies, with the purpose of education in mind, we must see man in correlation with his surrounding environment and how his adaptation to it is created.'

Dr. Montessori found that the growth of a child's creativity developed spontaneously as the child's intelligence becomes established through his interaction with a prepared environment. The development of creativity depends on the child's progression through the stages of cognitive growth; from sensori-motor intelligence to intuitive thought, to concrete operations and finally to formal operations. Creativity then, is not so much developed by a concentration on its stimulation, so much as it evolves at the end of a long process of cognitive development which had absorption of reality as its beginning point.

A natural law governing the development of a child's imagination and creativity are inborn powers in the child that develop as his mental capacities are established through his or her interaction in the environment.

The environment must itself be beautiful, harmonious and based in reality in order for the child to organise his or her perceptions of it.

When he has developed realistic and ordered perceptions of the life about him, the child is capable of selecting and emphasising processes necessary for creative endeavours. Dr. Montessori emphasised that this selective capability requires three qualities:

- a remarkable power of attention and concentration,
- a considerable autonomy and independence of judgement and
- an expectant faith that remains open to truth and reality.

In addition to an environment of beauty, order and reality, Montessori realised that the child needs freedom if he is to develop creativity:

- freedom to select what attracts him in his environment,
- to relate to it without interruption, and for as long as he likes,
- to discover solutions and ideas,
- to select an answer on his own and
- to communicate and share his discoveries with others at will.

The child in the Montessori classroom is also free from the judgement by an outside authority that so annihilates the creative impulse.

Dr. Maria Montessori viewed creativity within the context of total development – intellectual, artistic, emotional and physical. Her plotting of child development traces the most significant of creative endeavours – the making of the personality, the construction of the child's self.

The environment is the source for creative process. We do not mean necessarily the art shelf, scissors and paste, clay, random play, finger-paint or musical instruments. These all play a role in the development. But the Montessori formula is simple – the child's integration is an integration of self, which comes from participation in the real from a very young age.

For the young child, imagination, art and music will be evoked by knowledge and experience of how the world really works, and with full application of the mind, the eye and the hand, will come mastery of the environment.

Art, like music, is a universal language which can be understood by all. During the early years the child's intellectual activity and physical skills are fused in a creative process which is unique to humanity.

References:

- Montessori, Mario M., *Education For Human Development*
 Polk Lillard, Paula, *Montessori - A Modern Approach*
 Kahn, David, *Nurturing the Creative Personality - Creativity, Self and Environment.*

MAA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

BRISBANE
 September 24-26
 Carlton Crest Hotel

This year the conference theme is

Towards the New Millenium: the Montessori Continuum 0-18

Guest Speakers are:

- Gary Casebeer**, on the adolescent 12-18
Greg MacDonald, on the 6-12 child
Pamela Nunn, on the 3-6 child, and
Tineke van Gasselt, on the 0-3 child

You will be able to hear about the continuous development of a Montessori child from 0-18 from very experienced Montessori teachers who specialise in each of these stages of development.

The conference will be the Montessori professional development highlight of the year for Montessori teachers, parents and educators.

Conference programs have been distributed.
 To obtain copies of the Conference program or for any further enquiries please contact

Carol Raleigh
 On 07-3878 2861 (home evenings)

REMINISCENT OF SAN LORENZO

BY DEIRDRE BERRY

After a long and sometimes fruitless search, I have found a premises for a new Montessori 3-6 classroom. I have a classroom at a local prep to year 12 school in the inner Melbourne suburb of Collingwood. This is a mixed suburb of public and gentrified housing and the school is next door to a high rise public estate. My delight in actually succeeding was somewhat overshadowed by concerns that were whispered by others. "Collingwood? That's a very rough area!" "Collingwood College! The kids will come in and smash all your beautiful things! "They are very light fingered here. Watch out for your possessions!"

I opened with my little group of 4 children as I am still awaiting a license to operate. At first the barriers to the corridor and the other classrooms were temporary as the internal walls were still to be created. The worries of others had filtered through to me and I looked at these big, noisy children with some trepidation, covered by a nervous smile.

They were fascinated by the Montessori classroom. Big groups would stand in the opening and stare at the orderly materials, the oven, the iron, the uncluttered walls and say, "It's beautiful here at the kinder - I wish I could come here - my little cousin, he could come! - Can I come and help? You have 2 real things in this room - the iron and the stove!" They told their parents, big sisters and brothers about "their new kinder" and I had visits from them too.

I realised that I needed to let them come in. I needed to satisfy their curiosity so that they could look at the room close up (and what would be missing when they left?) I stopped them while the young children were there, but said that they could visit on Friday. In they streamed, about 20 of them suddenly looking very big against the small furniture. "What's this for? What do the kinder kids do with these? It's so nice here." I couldn't answer all their questions. Then - "Can I paint? - Is it OK if I play with the play dough? What do you need cleaning?"

I looked around - there were children suddenly focused. They were painting, some had the play dough on the floor rolling, cutting, smiling to themselves, others were rewashing the little dishes, the fruit bowl, repolishing the silver and walking around with blindfolds. I knew then that it would be alright. More than alright. When the bell went for the end of lunch they left the classroom shining. As the last left, she picked up the keys from near a cupboard which had my purse and other valuables in it and said "You dropped these." I wandered around in a daze noting that the little box of animals was missing from the continent map. Oh well, I said to myself, if that's all that's missing, it's not too bad. I walked over and saw that they had replaced the blindfolds on their hooks and found the little pill box put carefully on a shelf.

One lunchtime, Yussef, a boy of about 9 was sitting very quietly in the doorway. I introduced myself and shook his hand. He sat on, quietly watching the younger children as they bustled about. Later a friend joined him and I overheard him sigh and say, "It's nice here....I wish I could go back to childhood again."

WANTED

MONTESORI MATERIALS REQUIRED IN CAPE YORK

It is some years since my father attempted to set up the Montessori Aboriginal Education Trust to bring Montessori education to a remote community in Cape York. He was inspired about Montessori education and, in particular, a small article on the successful introduction of Montessori maths to the Strelly mob in W. A. Unfortunately he died before he could finalise the trust into a practical scheme.

In the interest of keeping the concept alive I researched Aboriginal learning styles and Cape York schools and wrote a report recommending the suitability of the Montessori approach for remote community children. Subsequent reports pointed out the high cost and the difficulty of introducing Montessori into remote Cape York.

However a pilot scheme is now finally being recommended focusing on the finding and training of Montessori teachers from Cape York. It has been a long and protracted project in the hands of lawyers and courts but my research findings inspired me to continue in the hope of one day seeing the fruition of my father's dream to give disadvantaged community children access to a better start in education.

I am now in the process of gathering second hand Montessori materials and equipment to help manifest the reality of a school. I would like to set up a functioning environment near Cairns which could act as a bridge to an eventual Montessori presence in remote Cape York.

Lucy Reynolds (02 9488 9294) is kindly acting as a collection point for any donated materials, children's books or Montessori equipment which any schools have to spare. It will be most appreciated.

Ardyn Masterman
Cairns, March '99

A Special Opportunity for AMI 3-6 Diploma Holders

Auditing the AMI Early Childhood Course

A limited number of places is available for AMI 3-6 diploma holders who are interested in attending parts of the upcoming AMI Early Childhood Teacher Education Course to be held from 27 October to 15 August 1999.

Five segments of the course are open to auditors:

- Montessori Philosophy •
- Practical Life •
- Sensorial •
- Maths •
- Language •

Auditing will be for lectures only. The cost of auditing each segment will be \$1000. A professional development certificate will be issued to auditors. Enquiries please contact Margaret Wayland on (02) 9527 5687.

TREASURER'S REPORT SUE BIRDSALL

The recent Shannon Helfrich workshops were a great success educationally but also raised considerable funds that will allow the Alumni Association to continue to support AMI teacher education in Australia. The AAAA has just handed over \$8000 to the newly formed Australian Montessori Teacher Education Foundation (AMTEF) to assist in start up costs for the 1999 course. The AAAA has also paid for all course advertising and for the establishment of a website and email address for AMTEF.

These efforts have been very successful. There have been over 550 course enquiries leading to 30 applications for the course. AMTEF will now be approaching schools directly to ask for their support by both donating monies to the college and by sponsoring students for the course. Some schools have already indicated their support as illustrated by the following letter:

"Southside Montessori School realises the importance of the ongoing Montessori teacher training in Australia. Therefore we are more than happy to support AMTEF financially. This will take the form of a family levy and will be forwarded to you in June and December 1999. We wish you every success in your endeavours.
Kind regards,
Lucrette van Someren Boyd
on behalf of Southside School Council"

Educateurs sans Frontières

An historic assembly is taking place in Italy at the moment: a group of Montessorians have come from around the world to participate in the first gathering of the Educateurs sans Frontières (Educators without Boundaries) This gathering, held on the 90th anniversary of the first Montessori training course, will be looking to the future of Montessori and to ensuring that the pedagogical vision of Dr. Maria Montessori will expand according to her original ideas and inspiration. Three Montessori directresses from Australia are participating in this historic event having travelled to Italy at their own expense. The Alumni Association would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate Sue Birdsall, Sally Connellan and Julia Nelson. We look forward to your return and to hearing of these new and significant developments.

*Educateurs sans Frontières
is taking place in
the historic Villa Montesca,
Città di Castello, Umbria, Italy*



MEMBERSHIP REPORT ROSEMARY DEAR

Membership currently stands at 97 including 30 interstate and overseas members and is steadily growing. Thank you for joining.

If you are not yet a member and wish to become one please fill in and return the form to the right. The Annual General Meeting of the Australian AMI Alumni Association will be held in the next few months. You will be sent a Notice of the AGM and must be a current financial member to vote.

I am occasionally asked what members get for their membership - and there are obvious answers - such as the newsletter, access to professional development events and the re-establishment of the AMI teachers' college in Australia. The less obvious answer lies not in the benefits of membership to the individual but rather the contribution Alumni members continue to make to the community and ultimately to the children in our care. The Alumni Association is now almost two years old and much has been accomplished in the last two years - most notably the re-establishment of an AMI teachers' college in Australia. The Alumni will continue to support the college and is also moving into new initiatives such as book sales, promoting Montessori education through its website and publications and in investigating the possibility of holding an AMI primary (6-12) teacher training course in Australia.

We rely on the support of the members - both in their membership fee and the time they volunteer to continue to move forward these valuable initiatives.

Australian AMI Alumni Association ~ Membership Form

Membership is offered at two levels:

- Alumni Members** - Montessori Teachers with an AMI Montessori Teaching Diploma.
- Friend Members** - Anyone who wishes to support the AAAA and its aims. Membership is conferred from 1 January to 31 December. Members joining in November or December will be extended full financial membership for the next year.



1. Alumni Membership

I am a qualified AMI teacher at the 0-3 3-6 6-12 level and would like to become a member of the Australian AMI Alumni Association. I understand that the primary goal of the AAAA is to promote local AMI Teacher Education.

Name:

Address:

School:

School Address:

Phone - Home: School: Mobile:

AMI Diploma No: Year Obtained:

Training Institute:

Signature: Date:

Full Membership Fees: Normal - \$50.00 Concession - \$25.00

Please enclose a copy of your Montessori qualification with your application and remittance.

OR

2. Friend Membership

I am interested in supporting the Australian AMI Alumni Association in its quest for AMI Teacher Education in Australia and would like to become a friend of the Association.

Name:

Address:

Phone - Home: Work: Mobile:

Interest in Montessori:

Signature: Date:

Full Membership Fees: Normal - \$50.00 Concession - \$25.00

AMI Group Membership

The Australian AMI Alumni Association encourages all its members to join the Association Montessori Internationale. The AAAA has arranged for a group membership of AMI which means you can become a member of AMI for just \$40.00.

Yes I wish to become a member of AMI and have included \$40 for annual membership fee.

Payment

I have enclosed \$ for AAAA membership and \$ 40.00 for AMI membership. *Please make cheques payable to the Australian AMI Alumni Association*

Total enclosed \$ Paid by: Cheque Money Order Cash

or please charge my Bankcard Visa Card Mastercard \$

Card Number: Expiry Date:

Cardholder's Name: Signature:

~ Thank you

AUSTRALIAN AMI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INC. • PO BOX 1063 SUTHERLAND NSW 2232 • PHONE/FAX 02 9546 4348

<p>Visit our new website</p> <p>www.montessori-amtef.org.au</p> <p>The site contains details of AMI teacher training, Montessori schools in Australia & Montessori education.</p>
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